

THE THRILLING ADVENTURES OF DICK ANTHONY OF ARRAN

By TALBOT MUNDY

THE SWORD OF ISKANDER

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THE Anthonys were ever an un-
distinguished breed, and though the last
one, the present laird, was a
sport from the true type,
he was the most uncomplaining, the most
indomitable of the lot.

"What good are you?" demanded his
uncle, Major Anthony. "What can
you do?"

"I have to thank circumstances,"
smiled Richard. "I can swim, I can
ride, and I can sail a boat against any
man I ever met."

"You're a swell," said his uncle, blow-
ing up with rage. "Sail a boat? That's all
you can do! That's all you own
beyond a suit or two of clothes! Sail
a boat!"

"I mean to," said Richard. "I'm only
waiting for you to talk business first."
"What business? Balderdash! What
do you think I'll do for you—a failure?
—a disgrace to the Anthonys? Not one
penny! No one but me!"

"You're disinherited! It's automatic.
The estate provided for you while
there was a chance to pass an examina-
tion that tested of what you failed
for the Indian Civil. To inherit, an
Anthonys must enter one or other of
the services. You know that. You
failed. What are you here for? I'll
send you to the barracks!"

"Did you ever fight one?" wondered
Dick.

"What d'ye mean?"

"I'm giving you your choice. You
fight or you pay a thousand
pounds; a thousand pounds was pro-
vided in the will for every Anthonys
in line of succession on entering any
of the services. I want that thou-

"You want I've heard of impu-
dence!" his uncle stammered.

"You either fight or pay," smiled
Richard without moving.

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean I'm entitled to the money
and I've come for it. Don't answer
yet. Listen! Just before old Mac-
Dougal died he told me how much
he wanted me to break my leg by
accident. He quoted your actual
words—'If he's not there, MacDougal,
at examination time there'll be a hun-
dred pounds for you.' He showed me
the actual hundred pounds. He said
notes you gave him. He offered them
to me. His son Andy has the hun-
dred now; he knows where it came
from, and he has tried to
get me to take it."

The Major's jaw dropped, but he
spun on his heel in an attempt to
bluster.

"What's your nest is this?" he
spluttered.

"He admitted that you bribed him,
and I thrashed him for it just three
weeks ago today. He and I are quits.
He said the admission in writing and
I had it witnessed; my lawyer has it
now."

The Major said nothing, thought-
fully. An officer—presumably a gen-
tleman—found out such expedients
for saving money, is perhaps wiser
if he does say nothing.

"Under the circumstances," continued
Dick, "I applied for a commission
in the Indian Civil. I know
where I am and where you are. I've
come for that thousand, and I'll take
it now or fight—now, understand—not
tomorrow or the day after—now! And
I'll give you your money in five
minutes to come to a decision! I've
got my eye on the bell, too—thirty
seconds are up! Think, man—you'd
better decide!"

After one wild glance around him
for a way of escape Major Anthony
sat down and thought deliberately.

"Pay," he said quietly, pulling
out his checkbook, just as Dick snatched
his watch shut. "It's extortion, but
I'll pay."

Dick watched him write the check,
and when he had signed and signed
a letter to the Lamlash bankers in con-
firmation of it.

"Now I'm off," he said, putting both
hands in his pockets. "You'll pay four
hundred a year to my lawyer. I know
he'll after you to know why. There's
only one thing more before I go—the
sword—I'm heir—I've a right to it—
I want it."

"Possession," said Dick, walking to
the mantelpiece, "is nine points of the
law."

He took down a wonderful old clay-
more, buckled with a beryl set
in the top of the hilt, and characters
etched rather rudely down the blade.

It had no scabbard, and though the
blade had been kept polished by al-
most unnumbered generations, the
weapon looked older than the mantel-
piece.

"I'll take it with me," said Dick,
and he walked to the door, and he
went to fight or to accept one condi-
tion, of course. The day a direct heir
is born I'll bring it back if I'm at the
other end of the world. Failing an
heir, it goes to the next of kin. I hold
against you—and don't let me—
catch you—again! Good day!"

Holding the strange sword by the
blade, he strode out, straight up the
road to Lamlash.

"Where away, Mr. Dick, sir?"
The voice and the accent were a
Scottish man's speaking English with the
perfect accuracy of learning newly
from a foreign land.

Atlantic. He won, and it took him
a month to win.

He was three days and three nights
and another day in making off
Brest, and he dropped anchor in
the harbor of Alexandria, too tired to do
anything but let out every fathom
of chain he had and fling himself be-
low to sleep.

Nursing his sailor's strength Dick
broke through the darkness
lumbering a little and again, with the
worst of the wrenching aquila took
hold of him, until a glimpse behind
him showed him that he was not alone.

Then he awoke. Then, with the
spirit that had brought him out still
running high, and growing higher as
the first dawn efforts of a watery dawn
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asked him, with a smile that won his
heart.

"No, no, laddy—na-na! We're gamin'
Alexandria, on the train the night!"
She smiled again and left him feel-
ing as if the Sphinx had grown young
again and had laid siege to him.

And that evening as he stood on the
station platform outside Dick's re-
serve compartment, he pointed out
the princess and her little retinue
fussing on to the train.

"She's a verra fine wumman, sir—
verra fine," he assured Dick, with an
air of confidence. "Name, sir? Her
name's the Princess Krakatochou-
wich. She's French. From France."

No one went in or out of the Hotel
Tewfik Pasha without the benefit of An-
drey's notice, and there was one he par-
ticularly favored; she had round, brown
eyes, and a dainty ankle, and she spoke
so little English that he had to repeat
things over and over again.

"If it is the business of a maid to
be seen in the street, she should be
seen in the street."

"I found you by wireless," he said
with a note of pride, as he dropped
into the cockpit later and accepted
bread and cheese.

"Did you desert?" asked Dick; and
those were the first words he had
spoken.

"I did not. I bought a man dis-
charged, and was verra costly, but he
broke into the hunner pound and
bought it."

"So you at y'r ser-vice," with an
air of triumph.

"Very well, Andy. Man the pump."
So the two men went on from Brest,
where one had started out alone, and
through all that followed there was
never any more compact than that be-
tween them—three words of agreement
and an order—"Man the pump." They
were enough.

Calre society is cosmopolitan, but
Princess Olga Karageorgovich was out
of place.

If she was more than two and twenty,
then the extra years were as art-
fully concealed as were her motives.

She had all junior officer's enthrall-
ment—enraptured—hypnotized by the
glow behind her eyes—attendant on
her. The seniors (and their wives) all
voted her a nuisance.

The princess posed as a student of
institutions. And after Dick had got
his anchor in the harbor of Alexan-
dria and came on to Cairo by express,
she grew interested in purely British
things, asking a brand-new line of
questions. Officialdom had hoped that
while she even meant to visit
Scotland.

The sunshine of Dick's character
had strengthened, now that he had a
companion of kind.

The Bay of Biscay had treated them
according to tradition. Turn about,
they had to nurse the little ship day
and night, night and day, ceaselessly.

When Andy was despatched out
would come Dick's babbles, and a
swaggering refrain would answer back
the storm, putting new fight in both
of them. But after that, the fol-
lowed blue sweet-sailing months in
which they waddled leisurely along the
coast of Africa, oblivious of time and
unannoyed by the flag of England.

For a few days Cairo swallowed
Dick's officialdom, for his father's sake,
put him up at the swiftest clubs and
entertained him. Sharp-eyed, wide-
eyed officialdom in sweat-wet suits ex-
tended facts from him and sympathized
in a manner all its own.

It was on a club veranda that Prin-
cess Karageorgovich heard Richard
say things which convinced her—which
made her send a cablegram or two in
code.

She was not supposed to hear. She
was supposed to be listening to the
admiral's chatter of a little group of
workmen. Dick never a lady's
man, even when the lady had soft
eyes and was twenty-two, would have
winced at the thought of sharing
secrets with her. The hot, tired-eyed
freedom of a little group of workmen.

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made her send a cablegram or two in
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"Well—my man is all those things—
and more! My man is English, and a
rebel—for I heard him say it! Now
for the legend, though! It must be a
prophecy—those always take the pop-
ular fancy best. Let us say—Iskander
was to come again—in Alexandria, the
city that he built and named after
himself—he was to come holding a
two-edged sword with a beryl in the
hilt, given him by some god."

"It sounds like legend—like genuine
legend."

"Then start the legend on its
rounds!" exclaimed the princess, with
the air of a teacher who has worked
out a small boy's problem for him.

"But—"

"It is time to act! This man, who
can lead if he is made to, has booked
his passage for tomorrow at day-
break."

"But—"

"Filmi Fared—who is the arch con-
spirator? Who stands more committed
to the cause?"

"I buy many curios," she told him.
"I know many of these men—and they
know me. I am a known buyer. My
agent knows the ropes. Let me send
for him, and tell him to investigate."

"I'd be awfully glad if you would,"
said Dick, wondering how a woman
could seem so young and speak so re-
liantly, and know so much.

So a Levantine named Henri was
sent for, and dispatched in search
Very little more than an hour later
he returned, and found Dick pacing
up and down on the walk outside the
hotel; and he knew—though Dick did
not know—that both of them were
watched through shutters of a first-
floor window. He led Dick close up
underneath the window before he
spoke.

"A syndicate of thieves has bought
the sword, sir, from the man who stole
it. They say they will only deal di-
rect. Will you come at once? If you
will keep at a little distance so that

No one moved. Then Dick strode
forward, suddenly. Andy closing up
behind him, covering his master's back
with his own huge bulk. In a second
Dick had the door open and was stand-
ing in the middle of the street. The
street was still safely in the hilt. It was
there, in his glee he swung it, and
shiver in the air above him, humming
in the air above him, humming

"Zindabad Anthony Shah!" yelled
somebody. And that was Persian. Dick
understood it—knew what it meant.
It was a shout of approval. The crowd
yelled out the answer, "Long live King
Anthony!"

Unhappily—but possibly with the
vague idea that he was proving own-
ership—Dick swung the sword aloft
and the crowd yelled a salvo of
applause and a flash of light. There
was no camera visible—only a
suspicious looking affair in one
far corner of the room.

"These gentlemen," said Filmi Fared,
standing up, "are the sworn repre-
sentatives of sixty-eight thousand arm-
ies who are at present in secret
rebellion against British rule. The
movement is world-wide—it is named
Pan-Islam—but our present plans are
confined to Egypt. We have waited
longly for a leader. You have been
chosen as that leader. You are re-
quired to take an oath of allegiance
to our cause—the Koran—the Bible
—and on your sword. You are re-
quired to swear that when you have
been raised to the throne of Egypt
you will reign constitutionally. And
you are required to commit yourself
in writing before these witnesses. You
must sign the document."

Dick threw back his tawny head
and laughed aloud.

"You sign, or you die," smiled Filmi
Fared.

Filmi Fared was about to speak
again, but he was interrupted by a
signal on another door, at the end of
the room opposite to that through
which Dick and Andy had burst in.

The signal was answered, and an-
other one replied again. Then the
door opened, and closed again behind
a woman, veiled to her heels in black.
Her slight figure seemed to be pink
and Dick wondered where—and when—
he had seen just such a slipper.

With a walk that was inevitable—
and vaguely familiar—she walked
toward the door, and through the
crowd, straight up to Dick. She tap-
ped him with a fan.

"You are the uncrowned King of
Egypt," she asserted—in French aloud
and in Arabic. "I am Olga Karageorgovich,
sister of the late King. I am in En-
glish, and in Arabic."

"Decidedly uncrowned!" smiled Rich-
ard, not knowing what to say.

She remained silent until a
story—a legend we have started—
reaches its required destination. It
went out tonight—like ripples on it.
When a stone is thrown into it.
It will travel fast. In the meanwhile
you had better sign. You are offered
more than you perhaps realize."

Dick smiled, but did not answer.
She turned toward the door and swept
it with a majestic look.

"Leave me alone to speak to him!"
she ordered.

The crowd drew back to the farthest
wall. Dick did not satisfy her;
she waved them away.

"You have your choice between a
kingdom and death!" said the woman,
standing close and tapping Richard
on the fan. She spoke in English
now.

"Thanks awfully!" laughed Dick.

"You are said to be Iskander, come
to life again with Iskander's sword.
That is a name that has gone out
tonight in ever-widening rings. In a
week all Egypt will believe it. In a
month—less, in two weeks—you will
be a ruler. You will be a ruler. You
will be dealing with the great powers—
acknowledged King of Egypt. Can
you not see that these fools—these
weaklings, none of whom dare lead—
are all waiting for you? You are afraid?
You are not afraid to speak your
mind to a high commissioner. Lead,
man! Lead on! You are known for a
rebel! Lead these other rebels!"

"I'm quite sober," said Dick, "and
I'm not a drug fiend. You've chosen
the wrong man."

"You're a proud man, aren't you?"
she purred. "You're thinking of your
honor, n'est ce pas? Well—it is gone,
my friend, and you must wear it back
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